



February 14, 2013

Good morning committee members, thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB78. My name is Tony Fox and I am a forester with a small forest products company in Lake City, MI. I have a degree in forestry from Michigan State University and 12 years of industrial experience.

Since I started my career in forestry in 2001, I have seen unprecedented escalation in so-called "protection" of our natural resources. Most notably is the sad state of affairs with our federal timberlands. The NEPA process, along with others, has bogged the USFS to a grinding halt while timber withers and dies. This is not an exaggeration. At one point in the late 80's, more timber died standing than was harvested on the Huron-Manistee National Forest. Actual harvest levels were 25% of the Allowable Sale Quotient. So, in the name protection, timber now dies in woods instead of becoming the economic force it could be. I support SB78, which is attempting to keep the Michigan Department of Natural Resources from repeating the mistake of their federal brethren.

The Living Legacy program is definitely of good intent. Who can argue with protecting bio-diversity? But, as Mike Vasievich and others have stated, bio-diversity in Michigan is currently protected on the magnitude of millions of acres. The DNR is so intent on appearing to do the right thing, that aren't giving themselves credit for the success that they have achieved. Since 1980, Michigan has gained 9% of product forest land, which now tops 20 million acres! Michigan annually ranks in the top two or three nationally in timber surplus. This isn't an accident. There are hundreds of dedicated foresters within the DNR who truly protect our state forests every day. Hand-cuffing these talented land managers is a slap in their collective faces.

Our company has been on the fiber-source roller coaster since 1977. The first few years saw plentiful federal timber. As this ride ended, the state filled the gap. Now, as we sit at this juncture, we have turned our focus to private land management. While this is a viable and worthy venture, it doesn't address the looming issues of over-mature state and federal forests prone to disease (oak wilt, beech bark disease) and insect damage (emerald ash borer). I feel that the economic impact, despite "no net loss" assurances, has been woefully underestimated when considering these factors.

Another point not considered is that of carbon cycling. Healthy, productive forests are carbon sinks. Over-mature, decaying forests are net carbon emitters. Also, wood products lock up atmospheric carbon for the life of that individual product. This is in stark contrast to energy

hogs like steel and concrete. I encourage you to read the paper written by Dovetail Partners which explains the carbon cycle in great detail.

The BSA or Living Legacy program on the surface seems to be a great idea. However, any true conservationist can see that it is misguided. Please consider all of the repercussions that this program will have, and back our support for SB78. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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